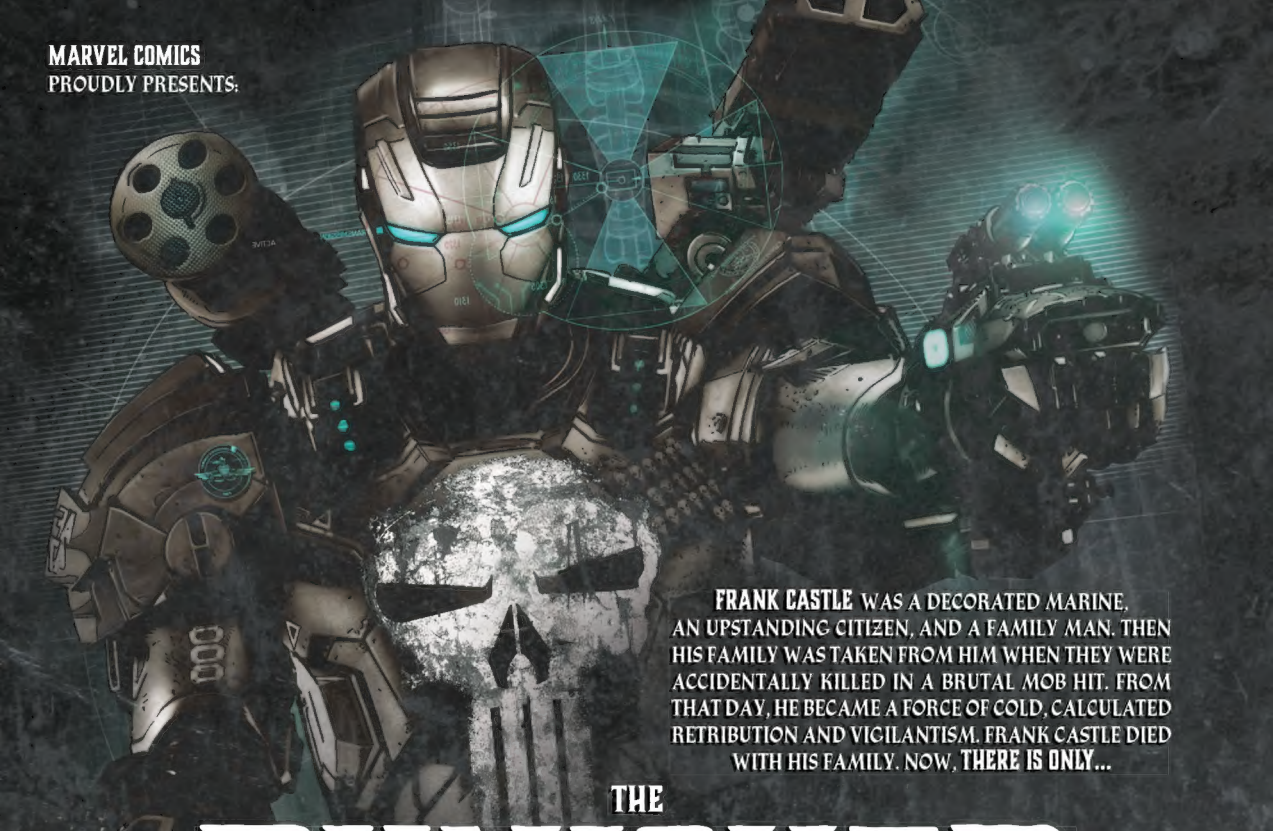
MARVEL LEGACY
PUNISHER: WAR MACHINE
222
THE PUNISHER
ROSENBERG
VILANOVA
LOUGHRIDGE
PARENTAL ADVISORY

MARVEL COMICS
PROUDLY PRESENTS:



FRANK CASTLE WAS A DECORATED MARINE, AN UPSTANDING CITIZEN, AND A FAMILY MAN. THEN HIS FAMILY WAS TAKEN FROM HIM WHEN THEY WERE ACCIDENTALLY KILLED IN A BRUTAL MOB HIT. FROM THAT DAY, HE BECAME A FORCE OF COLD, CALCULATED RETRIBUTION AND VIGILANTISM. FRANK CASTLE DIED WITH HIS FAMILY. NOW, **THERE IS ONLY...**

THE PUNISHER

FRANK CASTLE IN **PUNISHER: WAR MACHINE** *PART FIVE*

FRANK CASTLE HAS TAKEN HIS WAR AGAINST CRIME GLOBAL AFTER NICK FURY HANDED HIM A VERSION OF THE WAR MACHINE ARMOR AND POINTED HIM TOWARD CHERNAYA, A SMALL COUNTRY WHOSE GOVERNMENT WAS VIOLENTLY OVERTHROWN BY GENERAL PETROV. THE PUNISHER BURNED, BLASTED, AND BOMBED HIS WAY THROUGH PETROV'S MEN, ONLY TO MEET HARSH RESISTANCE FROM FORMER S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENTS WHO SOLD OUT TO PETROV WHEN S.H.I.E.L.D. DISBANDED. THE CHAOS FRANK LEFT IN HIS WAKE DID ITS JOB, DRIVING PETROV OUT OF HIDING. NOW THAT HIS TARGET IS IN SIGHT, PUNISHER IS ON THE MOVE.

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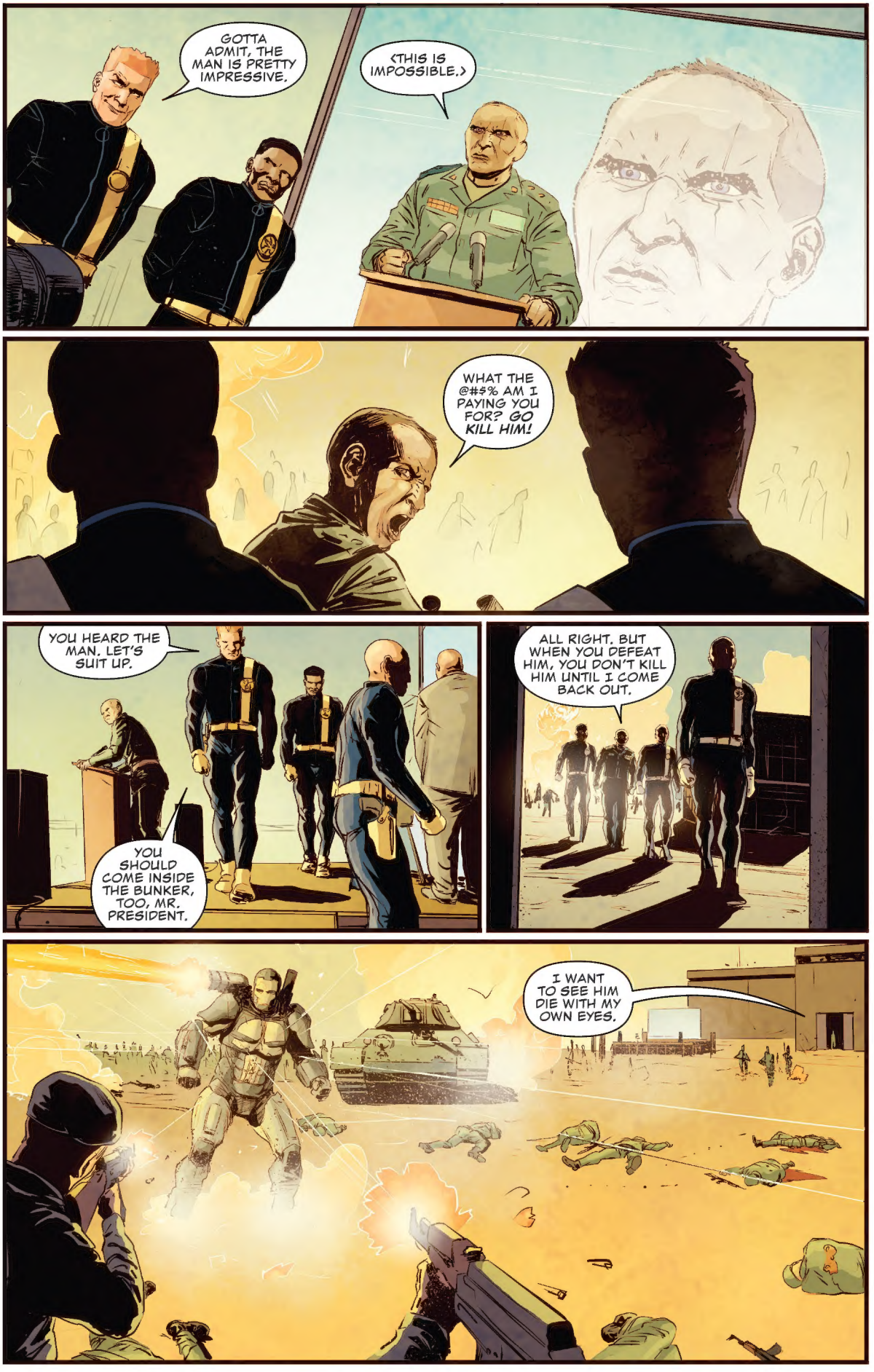
‹TODAY IS A GREAT DAY.›*
*TRANSLATED FROM CHERNAYAN.
‹THE WORLD HAS RECOGNIZED THIS GOVERNMENT AND THIS NEW NATION WE CREATED. THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHERNAYA IS NO LONGER A DREAM.›
‹WE ARE NO LONGER REVOLUTIONARIES AND DREAMERS FIGHTING FOR A RETURN TO GLORY. TODAY WE ARE A NATION REBORN.›

〈AND OUR NEW NATION WILL BE ONE BASED ON THE TRADITIONS AND VALUES... OF...OF...〉
〈WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING OUT THERE?!〉
GRRRUMGH

FRANK CASTLE! PUNISHER!
YOU WON'T WIN, FRANK. THESE MEN, MY MEN, WILL FIGHT TO DEFEND ME TO THE LAST.
I KNOW.
BOOM
BOOM
WHAM

HEY THERE, FRANK. I THOUGHT WE DISCUSSED THIS.
NOW'S NOT A GOOD TIME, FURY.
WARNING.
SHHZZZZZZ
OH, I'M SORRY. WHEN WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO DISCUSS HOW YOU DISOBEYED A DIRECT ORDER FROM ME TO LEAVE CHERNAYA AT ONCE?
TOMORROW AT NOON WORK FOR YOU?
NO. IT DOES $#%&*@ NOT WORK FOR ME.
WARNING.
BLAM
I'M FINISHING THE MISSION, FURY. THAT'S WHY YOU SENT ME.
IF YOU WON'T LISTEN TO ME, CASTLE, I HAVE WAYS OF STOPPING YOU.

YOU KNOW I'M CLOSE, FURY. PETROV DIES TODAY OR I DO. AND I KNOW YOU'RE OKAY WITH EITHER OPTION.
WARNING.
YOU'RE FORGETTING ONE THING.
WHAT ABOUT HIS NUKES, FRANK?
WE BOTH KNOW IF PETROV HAD NUKES YOU'D HAVE SHUT ME DOWN BY NOW. AND HE WOULD HAVE USED THEM. NOW, I'M TRYING TO WORK...
WARNING.
...BUT I'VE GOT YOU THREATENING ME IN ONE EAR AND THIS SUIT WARNING ME IN THE OTHER.
FIRST ONE OF YOU THAT GETS THE OTHER TO SHUT THE #@$% UP WINS.
THIS ISN'T A GAME, FRANK. WE--
CONNECTION TO COLONEL FURY MUTED.
I WIN.


GOTTA ADMIT, THE MAN IS PRETTY IMPRESSIVE.
<THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE.>
WHAT THE @#$% AM I PAYING YOU FOR? GO KILL HIM!
YOU HEARD THE MAN. LET'S SUIT UP.
YOU SHOULD COME INSIDE THE BUNKER, TOO, MR. PRESIDENT.
ALL RIGHT. BUT WHEN YOU DEFEAT HIM, YOU DON'T KILL HIM UNTIL I COME BACK OUT.
I WANT TO SEE HIM DIE WITH MY OWN EYES.

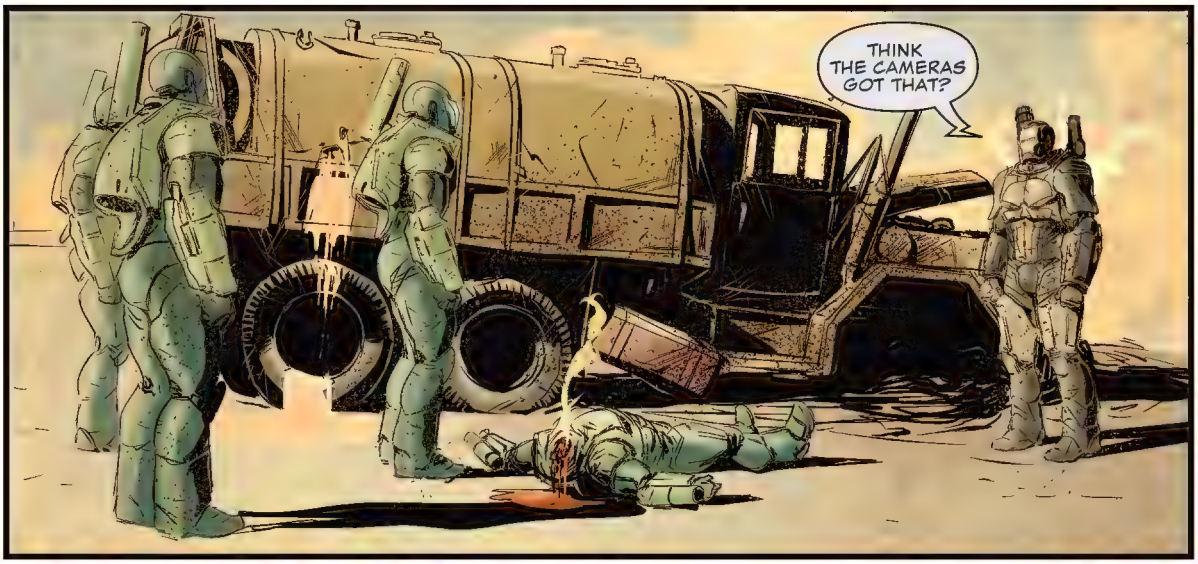
<WHERE DID HE GO?!>
<I DON'T KNOW!>
<HE'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF US!>
"<FIRE! FIRE!>"
KACHOOM
THOOOOOM

THE LEGENDARY FRANK CASTLE. I NEVER IMAGINED YOU WOULD BE THIS STUPID.
YOU DO KNOW THAT WE HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE U.N. AND YOUR UNITED STATES.
YOU ARE ATTACKING A SOVEREIGN NATION NOW. THIS IS A WAR CRIME.
AND THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING, FRANK.
YOU'RE GOING TO TRY AND KILL A WORLD LEADER?
YES.

FINE. THEN LEAVE MY MEN ALONE. YOUR FIGHT IS WITH ME. COME AND GET ME.
CRASH

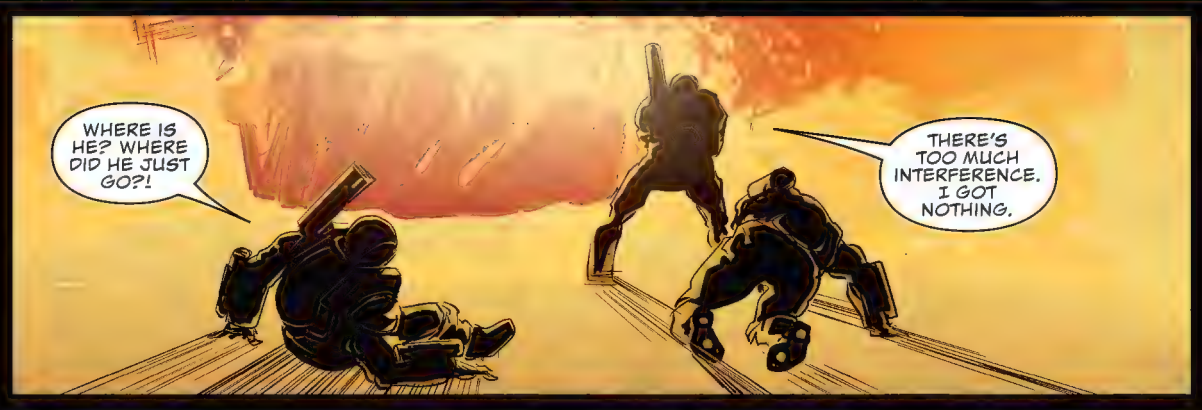
IT'S OVER, CASTLE. WE'VE DONE THIS ONCE ALREADY. YOU KNOW WE CAN DO IT AGAIN.
YOU REALLY WANT TO WORK FOR THIS MONSTER?
WE WANT JOBS, FRANK. WE WORKED FOR S.H.I.E.L.D. THEY LET US GO. PETROV WAS HIRING.
WE DID HIS GIG, BUT NOW PETROV'S GOT WHAT HE WANTED, SO WE'RE GOING TO NEED NEW JOBS. AND CAPTURING THE PUNISHER IS ABOUT AS GOOD A RÉSUMÉ PIECE AS WE'RE GONNA GET.
BUT IT'S ONLY SLIGHTLY BETTER THAN KILLING YOU.
C'MON, MAN, WE'RE FANS. WE RESPECT YOU. DON'T MAKE US DO THIS.
I WON'T.
LOOK AT THAT, I KNEW YOU'D UNDERSTAND.
LET'S MAKE SURE THOSE CAMERAS GET ALL OF THIS.
THIS IS GONNA BE BIG.

THIS IS THE RIGHT MOVE, FRANK. YOU'LL BE TAKEN CARE OF. YOU GOT A LOT OF FANS OUT THERE. HELL, I HAD POSTERS--
HE'S GOT SOMETHING IN HIS HAND!
WHU--
THUMP
OH, GOD! IT'S PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE! GET IT OUT! GET IT--
BOOM


THINK THE CAMERAS GOT THAT?

LOOK OUT!

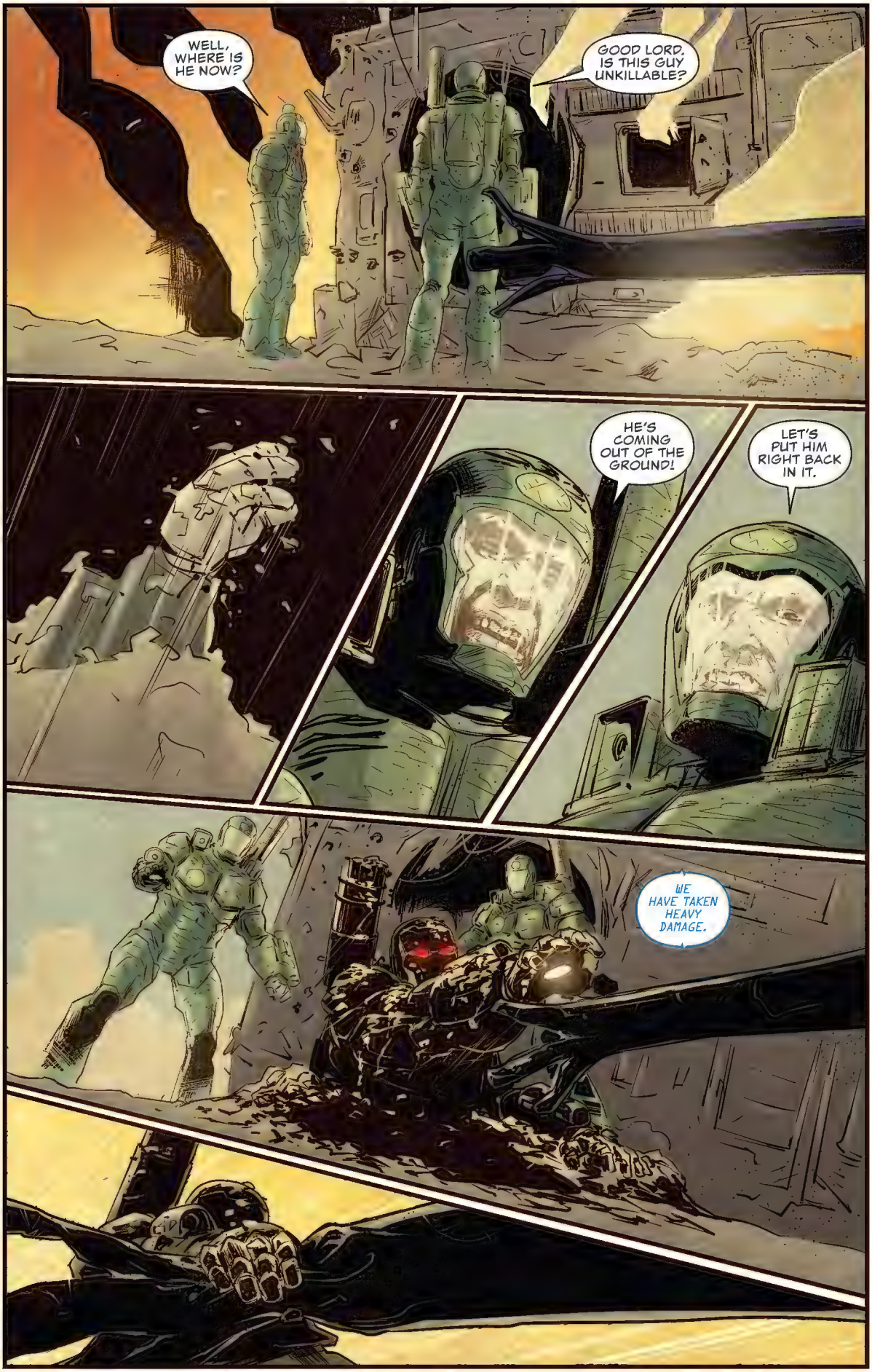
THOOM


WHERE IS HE? WHERE DID HE JUST GO?!
THERE'S TOO MUCH INTERFERENCE. I GOT NOTHING.

THERE!
HE MUST BE BY THE TANK.
SPENCER, CHECK INSIDE.
BE READY FOR ANYTHING.
I CAN'T SEE...
ACK!
NO!

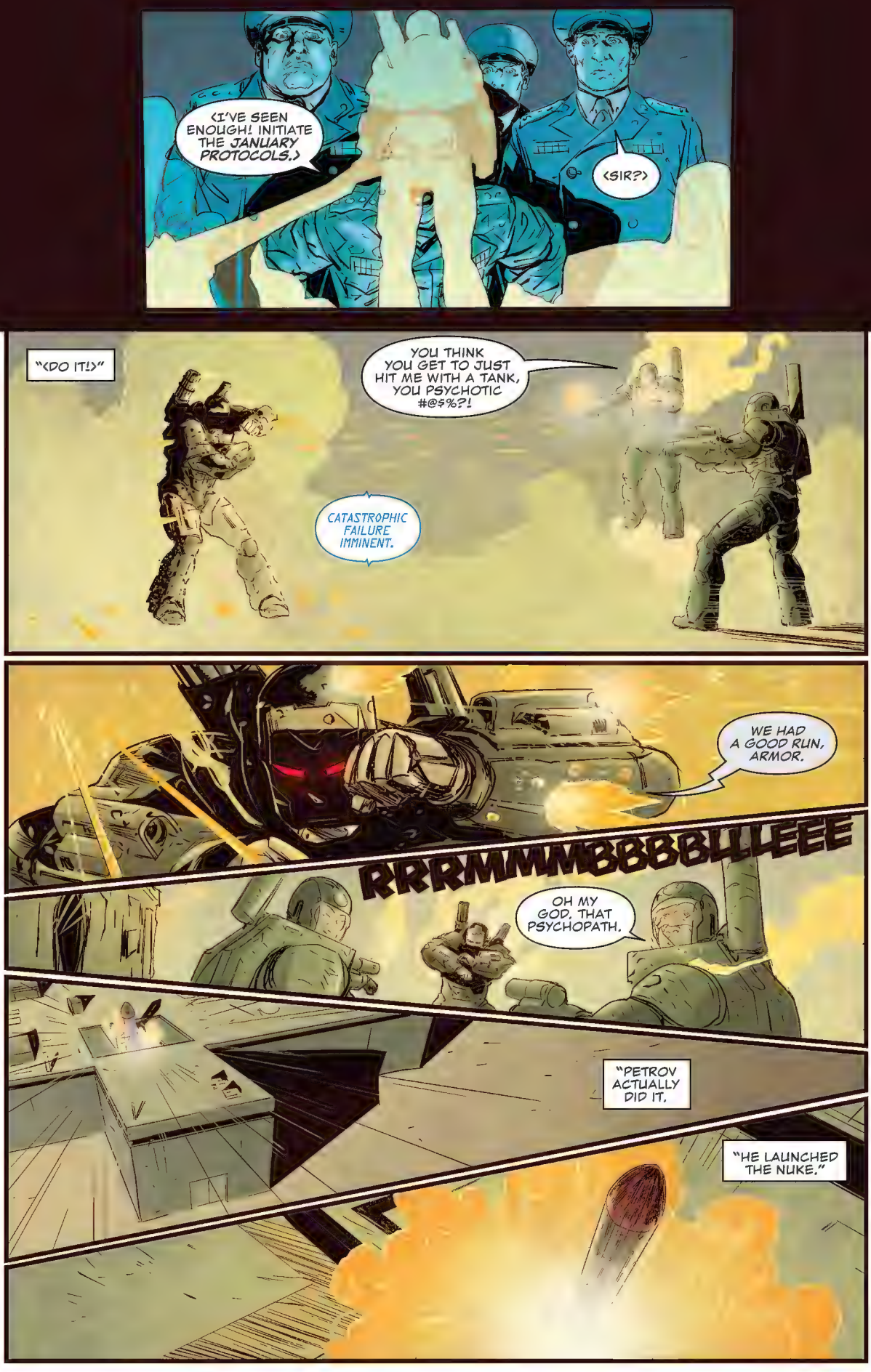
SCREW THIS. LIGHT IT UP!
SPENCER IS STILL IN THERE!
HE'S ALREADY DEAD. LIGHT IT UP!
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

CAREFUL. SPREAD OUT. WOOD, CHECK THE OTHER SIDE.
THUD
SPENCER'S DEAD. NO SIGN OF CASTLE.
WHERE DID HE GO?! WOOD, WHAT DO YOU SEE?
A GIANT HOLE IN THE BOTTOM OF THE TANK...
CASTLE... BLASTED OUT?


WELL, WHERE IS HE NOW?
GOOD LORD, IS THIS GUY UNKILLABLE?
HE'S COMING OUT OF THE GROUND!
LET'S PUT HIM RIGHT BACK IN IT.
WE HAVE TAKEN HEAVY DAMAGE.

TACTICAL WITHDRAWAL ADVISED.
BLAST
NO.
KABAAM
SYSTEM MALFUNCTION.
BANG BANG BANG BANG

STAY BACK!
THOOM


(I'VE SEEN ENOUGH! INITIATE THE JANUARY PROTOCOLS.)
(SIR?)
"(DO IT!)"
YOU THINK YOU GET TO JUST HIT ME WITH A TANK, YOU PSYCHOTIC #@$%?!
CATASTROPHIC FAILURE IMMINENT.
WE HAD A GOOD RUN, ARMOR.
RRRMMMBBBBLLLEEE
OH MY GOD. THAT PSYCHOPATH.
"PETROV ACTUALLY DID IT.
"HE LAUNCHED THE NUKE."

COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS BEING OVERRID--
CASTLE!
YEAH, YEAH, I SEE IT, FURY. ANY ADVICE?
DON'T #$%& THIS UP.

FRANK ANSWERS

Things in Chernaya seem to be going from bad to worse...which means our excitement is just going from crazy to ludicrous! Let's see how you all have been feeling about the recent issues...

Matt and Company,
The last time I read THE PUNISHER was back in the early '90s when I was a kid. I'm grown now and a veteran and I see how prescient your current run is. It is good to see that Frank has changed with the times and the current storyline has much to say about the nature of warfare as well as the state of the world.

I admit I was very skeptical about Frank getting the War Machine suit. After reading #218 and #219 I realize that it was a stroke of brilliance because wars are no longer fought as they were twenty years ago. This run is raising some good questions, like the future of war and the application of technology for grunts like Frank. I like the fact that you have chosen an Eastern European locale as well as the choice of non-state actors. Perhaps the next storyline can feature something in the Pacific!

Make mine Marvel,
Jarrett
Asbury Park, New Jersey USA

Hey Jarett,
First of all thank you for your service. And thanks for checking the book out after all this time. We all appreciate that. As for your thoughts on our current story, I'm glad that it resonated with you. Putting Frank in the armor is not something we decided to do lightly. There are so many story possibilities and issues we can touch upon with him in the armor, and hearing that people think those have value is always nice. But yes, the changing face of war and global politics is something that we thought it made sense for Frank to dip his toe into. As for sending Frank to the Pacific for the next arc, it's a good idea. But I think he's going to be heading to a different type of jungle.

Sidenote: I went to a coffee shop called Booskerdoo in Asbury Park once. It was really good. You should check it out. And keep reading the book. I hope you like where it goes.

Hi guys,
At the age of 42, I'm not ashamed to admit I read comics! I've just read THE PUNISHER: WAR MACHINE #220. Frank Castle has always been one of my favorite Marvel characters, either in the various movies, comics, or the Netflix series! I'll admit, I hadn't read a Punisher comic for a LONG time, until Becky Cloonan's recent run, which I really enjoyed! This new "War Machine" run improves on that in EVERY way. I absolutely LOVE it! Where will it take Frank? I don't know! But I'm strapped in and ready for one Hell of a ride!!!

David
Scotland

Hi David,
You definitely shouldn't be ashamed to admit you read comics! Comics are one of the driving forces of modern pop culture, carry a rich tradition going back well over a hundred years, in many cultures are as respected an art form as can be found, and are the preferred medium of some of the best writers and artists alive today. And also, we had the Punisher tear a guy in half. Where else are you getting that?!

I'm glad Becky and co. brought you back to the fold and we didn't drive you off. I think we're doing something pretty different then what they were doing, but finding the readers who enjoy both is really the fun of comics for me. While we creative teams come and go, these characters are forever. And picking up that torch from the folks who came before, or handing it off to the folks who come next, that's so exciting. But I'm sticking around for a bit. I put Frank in that suit so I'm gonna run with it as far as I can go. I really appreciate your coming along for the ride.

After the last letter I feel like I should say something nice about Scotland, but I've never been. I hear it's lovely.

Dear PUNISHER Team,
I have really been enjoying this new take on the Punisher and am excited to see where the story goes. The writing and art have been stellar and everyone involved with this book deserves immense praise. I can't wait for the next issue, keep up the great work!

Tyler Bruso

Hi Tyler,
Thanks for the kind words! I can't wait for you to read the next issue! It's one of my favorites so far. Lots of stuff blows up.

Hey Matthew and everyone over at Frank Answers,
Okay, so in the last letters column Matthew posted his top 5 Frank Castle moments and I feel there were some serious missed opportunities, among them: the time the Punisher killed a 100-year-old man on his birthday in front of his whole family, the time the Punisher fought Wolverine and discovered living dinosaurs, and a certain incident involving a polar bear.

My question is a follow-up on this theme: what are your top 5 Punisher covers? Mine are as follows:

5. PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #19. "YOU'VE JUST RENTED A JET-SKI TO THE PUNISHER. KISS THAT BABY GOODBYE!"

4. PUNISHER VOL. 2 #52. Frank firing an uzi directly at the reader while holding what I can only describe as a pile of cuddly babies.

3. PUNISHER VOL. 2 #14. Frank is a substitute teacher at a high school where graffiti on the lockers reads "KINGPIN RULES!"

2. PUNISHER: BORN #1. Just plain haunting.

1. DAREDEVIL #183. Not technically a PUNISHER cover, but c'mon.

Anyways, longtime reader, longtime writer. Blah blah blah keep up the good work.

Regards,
Eli Boonin-Vail,
Iowa City, IA

Okay, Eli.
A lot to unpack here. Let's dive in. Obviously the Punisher killing an old guy on his birthday, punching a bear and finding dinosaurs is great. Can't argue with any of that.

With that said, top 5 covers. Let's go. There is a 0% chance I don't regret doing this later.

5. PUNISHER #10 from last year. All of Declan Shalvey and Jordie Bellaire's covers are magical. #6 and #15 were favorites, but this snowy scene is just so haunting and brutal.

4. PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #19. This Jim Lee / Klaus Janson cover is a great juxtaposition of violent and relaxing images. But obviously it's the caption that puts this one in the cover hall of fame.

3. MARVEL PREVIEW #2. What I believe is the Punisher's first headlining issue also gets this amazing painted cover by Gray Morrow. There is an issue's worth of story in that cover alone.

2. THE PUNISHER (2004) #2. Tim Bradstreet does some of my favorite PUNISHER covers because he makes him look like a guy you'd see on the subway, and that's terrifying. All of the covers for this MAX series are great, but #2 has a coolness to it that is hard to ignore. And over three years later the cover to #42 serves as a companion piece. You don't get detail like that a lot.

1. PUNISHER VOL. 1 #1. This gorgeous painted cover by Phil Zimelman and the legendary Mike Zeck tells you so much. You knew when you bought this that it wasn't going to be like any other comic you owned. And it wasn't. The book was dangerous and the cover made that clear from go. Each cover is flawless, but this was the showstopper. Bonus points for it saying "#1 in a 4-issue limited series" when there were five issues. Later issues got that right and then wrong again. Trivia!

Honorable mentions:

PUNISHER VOL. 2 #1 by Klaus Janson. Only didn't make the cover because it's a riff on an earlier cover.

PUNISHER: Kingdom Gone by Zaffino, Wellington and Nowlan. This one has just always stuck with me.

The Punisher poster by Moebius. Didn't make the list because it's not really a cover. But it's Moebius, so...

And since I've turned our letters section into some sort of weird travel blog I will add that I went to Iowa City once. I had a really good burger at a place called Short's. I dunno...

I just gotta say I'm blown away by PUNISHER: WAR MACHINE thus far! The first issue offers a nice change of pace from the last run by placing Frank in a larger part of the Marvel Universe by having him operate under Fury, and the second issue delivers the exact kind of great PUNISHER moments that I expected, both violent and emotional, with an awesome War Machine twist! Looking forward to what the team will come up with moving forward. Great job all around!

Dom

Hey Dom,
If you like what we've been doing so far I think you are really going to like where we are headed. I can't say any more or my editors will kill me.

Holy #&!@! What a run so far--I can't believe how awesome this ride has been since #218. I've been a fan of the Punisher since my early Spider-Man days and since the Netflix show I have gotten even more addicted to Frank Castle. I can't thank you guys enough for doing what you do to bring this character to life while staying true to the character and not pacifying him with the times. These are the types of comics that give me hope and keep me coming back for more. Can't wait to see what happens next.

Respectfully,
Paul Lewis

Hello Paul,
First of all I like someone who opens their letter by cursing at me and ends it with "respectfully." I know it sounds like I'm being sarcastic, but I'm totally not. And all the other stuff in between is nice too. Paul, you get a lot of points for enthusiasm. #%$! yeah!

I, too, am a huge Punisher fan, and have been since that first five issue limited series came out in the '80s. I used to have six of those #1s where he's firing two "hand cannons" in both hands! I might be a bit older than you, I'm 44, I grew up in the NYC suburb of Westchester County, Yonkers. You describe NY through the various decades, as well as your explanation of the kind of person Frank is, perfectly. Just like you, at a certain point in my life I lost touch with comics. But the run from, I believe, 2012? Ennis? #1-16, then a five-issue conclusion ending with the Avengers taking him down at Rye Playland, made me love the Punisher again. I'm super psyched to see what you've got in store for this current series, I love your style of storytelling and I'm kinda loving the artist's rendition of Frank! Looking forward to the rest of this volume! Thanks!

Christopher Spiegel
NY

Hi Christopher,
Thanks for writing in. I'm glad my letter connected with you. A lot of folks wrote me to tell me they liked it, but it's people from the New York area the most. As a son of NYC myself, that makes me happy. And yes, there are very few writers I'd say are "born to write" a certain character, but Ennis to me was born to write the PUNISHER. I'm just happy to get to follow his lead. Thanks for reading!

I'm not going to tell you a cool place to go in New York. That would feel weird to me.

Hey guys!
Just wanted to drop in and tell the PUNISHER team that I'm loving this story arc so far! Seeing Frank in the War Machine armor feels…right! He's an obvious fit for it, and he looks badass!

Love the book, keep it up!
Ace

Hey Ace,
Thanks for writing, Ace. I don't think I've ever spoken to someone named Ace before. It's pretty awesome, Ace. Wait... No. I did. He was okay. Either way, thanks for reading, Ace!

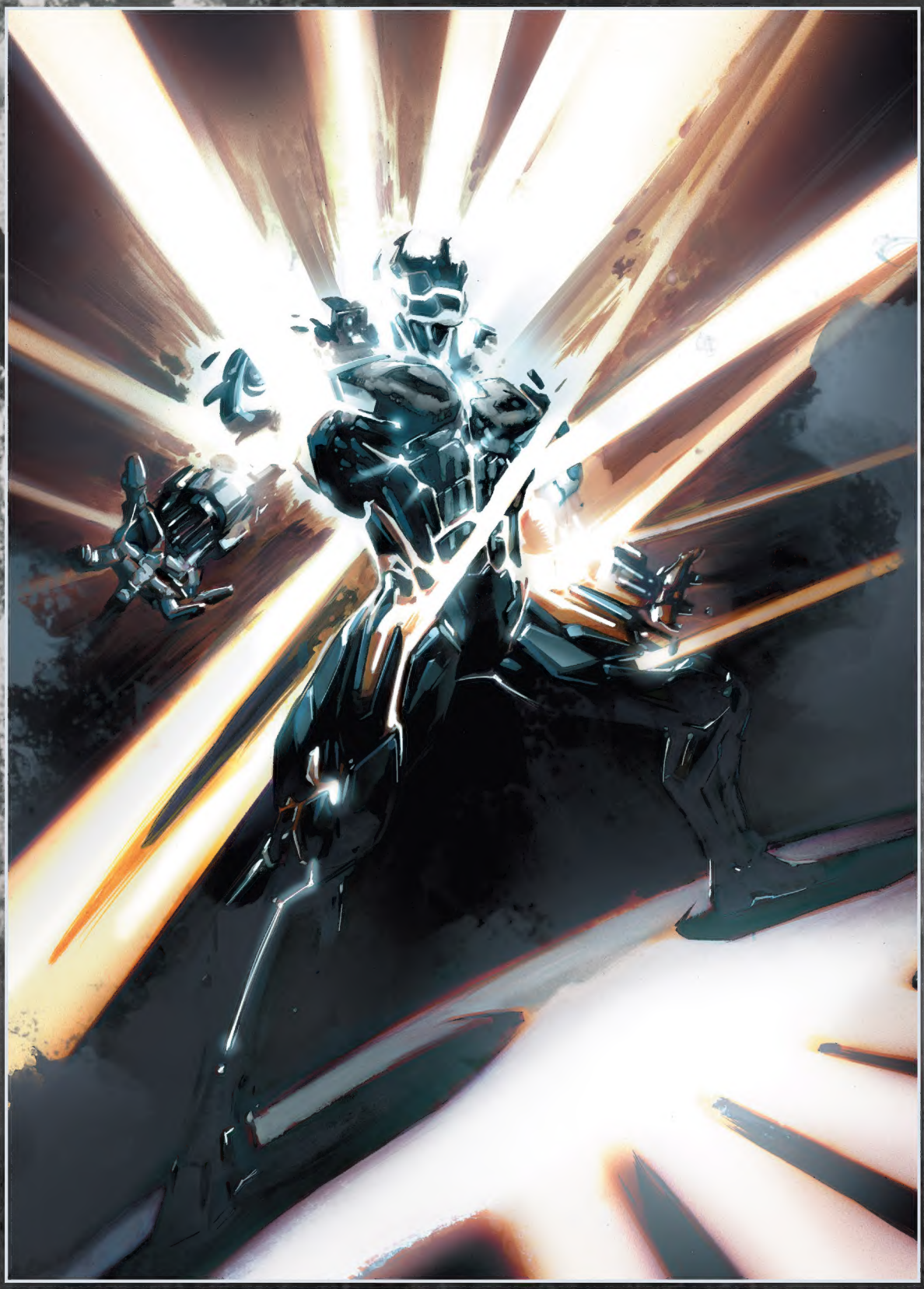
THE PUNISHER Legacy #220, War Machine: Part 3. Rosenberg...
Thanks

Matthew Salerno

You're welcome.

Michael Nathanson, who played Sam Stein on the Netflix Punisher show, stopping by the office to chat with editors Jake Thomas and Mark Basso!

NEXT



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